

COP26 – SpACE launch – new public platform for the built environment pops up

In the run up to COP26, SpACE has been launched in Edinburgh.

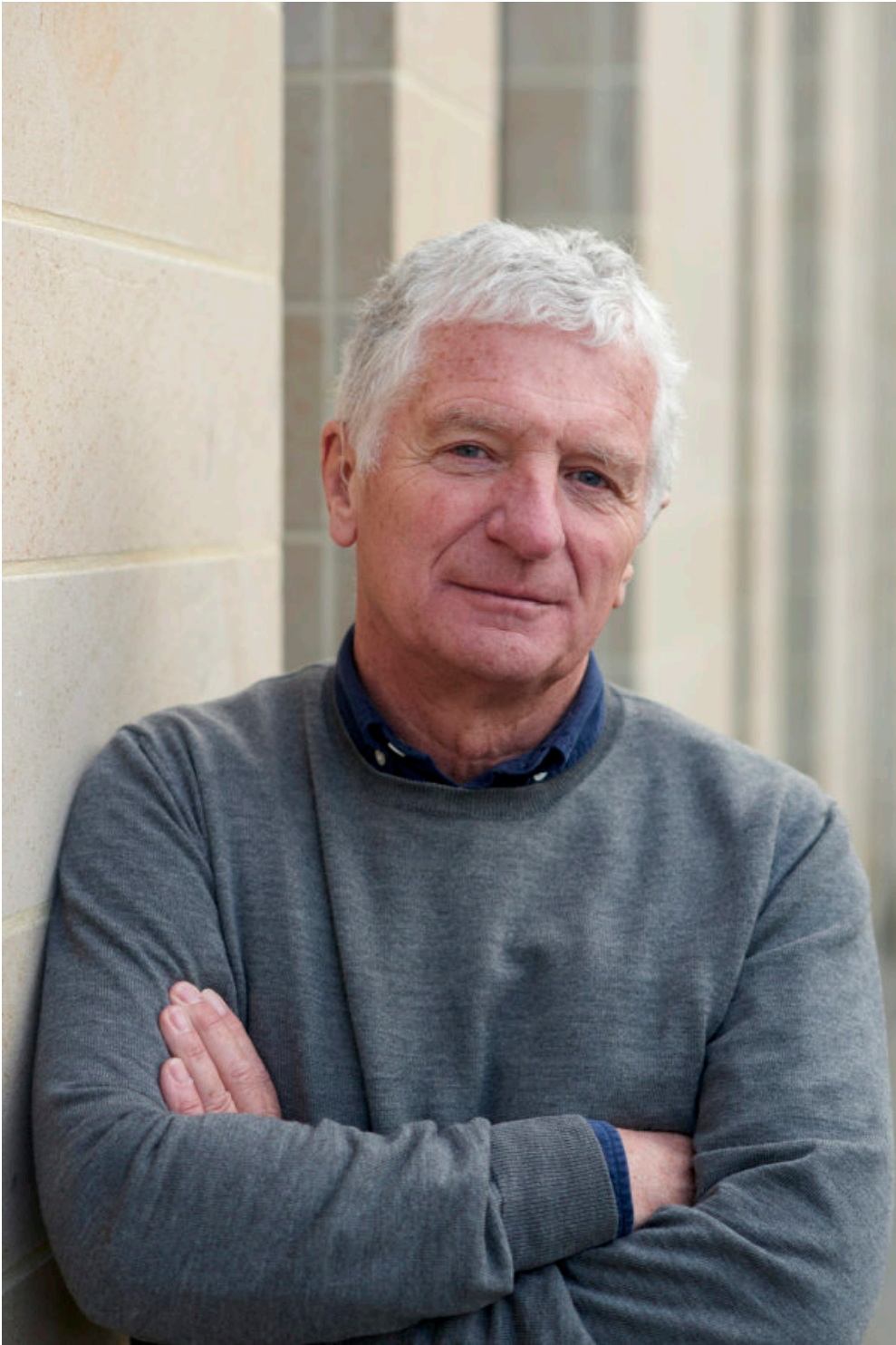
SpACE stands for the Space for Architecture + Carbon + Environment, and its opening will coincide with the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow on 31 October 2021.

The location is an interesting one at the former Fire Station on Lauriston Place, now part of the Edinburgh College of Art. This was chosen as it is both a publicly accessible and highly visible building, and a great example of how an old building can be re-used. In the summer the fire station became the bookshop for the Edinburgh International Book Festival.

This is a new public platform for architecture, carbon and the built environment, chaired by eminent architect, Rab Bennetts, OBE, which will examine the climate emergency in practical terms. While this is a pilot pop up the programme is intended to show that this could become a permanent fixture in the city. Bennetts has told us often of his desire to set up an [architectural centre](#) in Edinburgh as a place for discussion about the built environment. Other cities such as Amsterdam, Bologna, Hamburg and London have established architecture centres, and now Edinburgh's SpACE will allow public engagement with design excellence and place making in the setting of achieving net zero carbon by 2030.



Visualisation of the new centre



Bennetts Associates Architects. Pictured Rab Bennetts.
Photograph: MAVERICK PHOTO AGENCY

Bennetts is the founding director of architect firm Bennetts Associates which is behind the highly regarded new building at the Bayes Centre as well as the Edinburgh Futures Institute which will reuse the old Royal Infirmary Edinburgh with innovative spaces underneath for gatherings and lectures.

There will be talks, workshops, and displays to educate and

learn about the changes which must be made in the next decade. All disciplines involved with the building industry are involved including architects, engineers, heritage bodies, developers, environmental specialists, universities, planners and researchers. The multi-discipline approach will encourage collaboration which will, it is hoped, shape public debate and understanding.

Culture Minister Jenny Gilruth MSP said: "It is vital that our built environment plays its part in tackling the challenges of climate change. The Scottish Government is pleased to support the pop-up SpACE exhibition in Edinburgh which is timed to coincide with COP26. It's important to engage the public by showcasing how architecture and design can adapt and provide a pathway to our net zero ambitions by 2045."

Rab Bennetts, architect and founder of Bennetts Associates and Chair of SpACE said: "There could hardly be a more appropriate moment to engage with the public about the impact of our buildings and places on climate change. As the world's eyes are on COP26 in Glasgow, our parallel event in Edinburgh can show how the changes that are essential to our homes, workplaces and public buildings are not only possible but can also result in a cleaner, healthier and more enjoyable built environment."

Tamsie Thomson, chief executive of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, said: "The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland is delighted and proud to support SpACE as a much-needed forum for public understanding of the built environment and its impact upon our climate. As Scotland prepares to host COP26, architects and their built environment colleagues must be part of the response to the climate emergency, and it's critical to raise public understanding of the difference they can make through a more responsible approach to design and construction."

Helena Ward, Creative Industries Manager at Creative Scotland

said: “There is a vital need for people to be aware of, and understand in what way the climate emergency will affect how we live, work, learn and play within our buildings and spaces. We need attitudes and behaviours to change to reduce our environmental impact. SpACE’s exhibition and events programme aims to engage audiences in a meaningful, relevant and practical way about what can be achieved as individuals and within communities, as well as at a policy and sector level.”

- The exhibition will include inspiring design and construction case studies to illustrate the journey to net zero carbon in the existing building stock, new buildings and neighbourhoods. Backed up by carbon data, these case studies will illustrate where the industry is and how far it has to go.
- A daily events programme will range from workshops by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Edinburgh World Heritage Trust (EWHT) to presentations of new techniques in commercial property, debates about existing building upgrades, exploration of digital city mapping, the work of the UK Green Building Council, films by community groups and consultations on Edinburgh City Council policies.
- The SpACE website will enhance the exhibition and events with links to wider sources of information and technical help.

SpACE is a registered Scottish charity and its steering committee reflects its pan-sector ambitions, comprising architects, engineers and surveyors, and organisations including the RIAS, Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, The City of Edinburgh Council, Architecture & Design Scotland and the University of Edinburgh.

The exhibition has been made possible with funding from Creative Scotland’s Open Lottery Fund, The Scottish Government, Historic Environment Scotland, The City of

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